

Remarks

Status of the Claims

Claims 1-18 were pending in the application. By this paper, claims 3, 9-7, 12, and 16-18 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1 and 10 have been amended. New claims 54-61 have been added. For the reasons set forth below, Applicant submits that each of the pending claims is patentably distinct from the cited prior art and in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the claims is therefore respectfully requested.

Interview

Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for the courtesy of the interview on December 4, 2006, during which Applicant's representative discussed the Section 112 rejection and the allowability of certain claims with the Examiner. Specifically, Applicant agreed to cancel dependent claims 7 and 16 because they appear to broaden, rather than narrow, their respective base claims. In the Office Action, the Examiner suggested that the Applicant could claim, as an alternative path, the use of light compression (as recited in claims 7 and 16) prior to storing multimedia content in the interim buffer. Accordingly, Applicant proposed filing these claims as separate independent claims. The Examiner indicated he did not believe that the prior art of record taught initial compression in the interim buffer followed by transcoding into a more complex encoding format, such as MPEG-2, and invited Applicant to file these amendments.

Section 112 Rejection

Claims 7 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. As explained above, Applicant has canceled claims 7 and 16 in favor of new independent claims 54 and 58. As pointed out by the Examiner, these claims, in dependent form, broadened their respective base claims. However, the Examiner suggested that if proper support was found in the specification, that Applicant could claim compression to the interium buffer as an alternative path. As discussed with the Examiner during the interview, these claims have support in FIG. 4 and pages 14-16 of the application.

As disclosed at page 14, a light compression module 410 may compress the incoming digital signal in real time before the content is stored on the mass storage device 120. The light compression module 410 requires less memory and processing logic (i.e., silicon gates) to execute its compression algorithm and is therefore less costly to manufacture. For example, an adaptive differential pulse code modulation ("ADPCM") algorithm may be employed with as little as 1280 bytes of memory because ADPCM evaluates entropy between adjacent video pixels rather than several adjacent video frames as does MPEG-2. Thus, the light compression module 410 may employ intra-frame encoding.

The lightly compressed multimedia content may then be transcoded in a more highly compressed format using an algorithm that uses both intra-frame and inter-frame encoding, such as MPEG-2. The transcoding may take place as a background task, and is illustrated in FIG. 4 in the transition between mass storage 120 and CPU

125 (e.g., MPEG-2). The more highly compressed multimedia content may then be stored in a long term multimedia buffer until it is needed by the user.

Canceled claims 7-9 have been rewritten as new claims 54-56, respectively. Canceled claims 16-18 have been rewritten as new claims 58-60, respectively. New claims 57 and 61 simply recite one particular form of an encoding algorithm that uses both intra-frame and inter-frame encoding, *i.e.*, MPEG.

Prior Art Rejections

Claims 1-2, and 10-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being allegedly anticipated by Kawamura et al. ("Kawamura"). Claims 4-6, 8-9, 13-15, and 17-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Kawamura.

As the Examiner pointed out in the Interview, Kawamura does not disclose or suggest initially compressing the multimedia content in the interim buffer, and thereafter compressing (transcoding) the already compressed content into MPEG-2 or another encoding format based on both inter-frame and intra-frame techniques.

The Office Action takes Official Notice of ADPCM and DV25 compression, which was originally recited claims 8-9 and 17-18, respectively. Applicant respectfully points out that, while the particular formats are known in the art, the use of one of these formats for "pre-compressing" multimedia content prior to subsequent recompression as a background task is not disclosed or suggested in the prior art of record.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, all pending claims represent patentable subject matter. A Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. If any issues remain, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

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